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## V.—MISCELLANEOUS.

*Psychologie de l'Attention.* TH. RIBOT. Paris, 1889, pp. 180. F. Alcan.

The convenience of M. Ribot's compilations will make welcome all contributions from his pen. Like his former works, the present monograph opens out a comparatively novel topic and treats it suggestively. Attention is a concentration of the mind, a monoideism. The typical movement of thought is a polyideism; a lighting on one thought, dwelling upon it slightly, then fitting to another, and so on. Change, movement, is the normal law. Attention, furthermore, is of two kinds, spontaneous and voluntary. The latter is the one most commonly treated, but is theoretically less important. The more primitive is the former, in which normal vital interest guides the attention. We see this in animals attracted by all that is connected with food; in children staring at the brightest color and listening to the loudest sound. In voluntary attention we are guided by what experience has proved to be useful. We substitute an artificial end for the natural attractiveness, until the power of holding the attention becomes second nature. This is the power that is educationally so useful; the absence of which is typical in the shiftlessness, the instability of the hereditary criminal, and its presence typical in the devoted student absorbed beyond all interruptions in his chosen work. To the description and detailed exposition of each of these psychologic processes M. Ribot devotes a chapter. The third chapter is devoted to the morbid states of the attention. A variety of forms occur. There is the constant dwelling upon trifles, the fixed ideas, the reasoning mania, where one cannot get away from attending to one narrow trivial train of thought; there is the lack of concentrative power seen in idiocy, in the incoherence of mania, in dementia, and in milder forms, from the influence of drugs or a headache. Perhaps the apex of concentration is seen in the trance states of hypnotism, where the mind seems a blank, except the single point upon which the suggestion has been given. The religious ecstasies are of a similar kind, and the case of St. Theresa distinguishing seven stages of ecstasy is given as a type. The mechanism of attention is motor. It is initiative action. Whoever cannot control his muscles cannot control his attention. The motor accompaniments are not merely accessory; they form an essential part of the process. In concluding, M. Ribot completes his valuable survey by noticing the physical antecedents of good attention, regularity, a healthy nervous system, and the like. Brief as the monograph is, it offers about as complete and methodical a treatise on attention as we possess.

J. J.

*Recherches sur la fatigue mentale.* FR. GALTON. *Revue Scientifique*, Jan. 26, 1889.

In this paper Mr. Galton gives a résumé of 116 replies sent in by members of an English teachers' organization to six questions of his on the signs and extent of mental fatigue. The answers bring together a considerable list of such signs, and furnish an excellent basis for subjective and objective observation. Of special interest is a case in which fatigue caused temporary fits of color-blindness. As tests for fatigue the following are suggested: the length of time